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ABSTRACT

This guide presents suggestions from experienced teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) for the first 2 days of class. An introduction describes how to organize the classroom. Next, the guide describes day 1 (begin to build a community spirit by introducing students to each other and the teacher in a nonthreatening manner) and day 2 (continue to build a friendly community spirit to help students relax and get acquainted, and become familiar with the textbook). The rest of the guide focuses on: "How Do We Discover Our Students' Needs?"; "What Resources are Available? What Materials Match My Students' Needs?"; "How Can I Find Out What Students Know?" (assessment); "How Much Homework is Necessary and What Kind?"; "Who Talks and How Much?"; "How Do Students Learn to Hear and Make English Sounds?"; "How Should Student Records and Reports be Kept?"; "What are Some Basic Teaching Approaches in an ESOL Class?"; "A Few More Thoughts"; and "Summary." (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education.) (SM)

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Teaching ESOL

A Quick Reference

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—D. Lee Wilson

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Contents

Introduction 1

Day One in an ESOL Class 3

Day Two in an ESOL Class 4

How Do We Discover Our Students' Needs? 5

What Resources Are Available? What Materials Match My Students' Needs? 6

How Can I Find Out What Students Know? *(Assessment)* 8

How Much Homework Is Necessary and What Kind? 9

Who Talks and How Much? 10

How Do Students Learn to Hear and Make English Sounds? 10

How Should Student Records and Reports Be Kept? 11

What Are Some Basic Teaching Approaches in an ESOL Class? 12

A Few More Thoughts 14

Summary 14

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Administering the BEST 15

Appendix 2 – Sample Information Form 19

Appendix 3 – Subscribing to the ESOL Discussion List 20

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Introduction

Teaching English to adult internationals is a very special adventure. It is a journey not only for the student, but for the teacher as well. It is exciting, slow, demanding, and uncertain; yet it is ambitious and maturing, too.

It's difficult to imagine what students expect as they enter their first ESOL class in the U.S. Whatever their expectations and hopes may be, the most important task for the teacher is to create a classroom with an atmosphere where English learning can happen. English learning happens when students feel comfortable with the teacher and with other students. English learning happens when students have time to listen to the language. English learning happens when students work with each other and share their learning experiences.

Whatever students' expectations and hopes may be, the most important task for the teacher is to create a classroom with an atmosphere where English learning can happen.

Experienced ESOL teachers have developed some tried-and-true methods that often work well for a new class. Following is a description of one way to approach the first two days of class.

How do I organize the classroom?

"First impressions are formed in 7 seconds." If this is true, what can be done to make this English class appealing? What about classroom environment and arrangement? One suggestion is to make the classroom welcoming and comfortable for the students.

An older Chinese student made his special contribution. For several days he brought a pillow to sit on because the folding chairs were hard, cold metal. One day he brought pillow covers and stuffing as a gift for each of his classmates, so they could be comfortable, too.

- **Arrange the room so there is adequate space to walk around** to observe and assist students.
- **Check the lighting and visibility** to be sure the students can see the boards without glare or reflection. Students may have uncorrected visual or auditory difficulties.

- **Remember some students are successful professionals in their own countries and find the shift to being unable to communicate very difficult.** Treating them as capable adults, greeting them with pleasure and respect is significant in making them comfortable. As students enter the classroom, it is important to stop whatever is being done and greet them by name.
- **Arrange textbooks, sign-in sheets, pencils, and other supplies somewhere in the back of the classroom.** This lets students follow the routine easily, even if they are late.
- **Use printing (manuscript writing), not cursive, for beginning levels.**
- **Put labels on doors, windows, chairs, tables, the chalkboard, etc., to help build the classroom vocabulary.** As soon as students learn these classroom words, add sentences and questions they need to use in asking for clarification and repetition. Examples: "Please repeat." "I don't understand." "Excuse me?" "What did you say?"
- **Include as much humor, commendation, and surprise in class as possible.**
- **Learn students' names and strive to pronounce them correctly.** Chinese students report that the person who remembers one's name after the first meeting has paid him/her a high compliment. If the name is difficult for the teacher to learn, the example of his/her trying hard and repeatedly is a good model for a student to have.
- **Except for giving their names, allow students who are beginners to delay speaking individually until they are comfortable doing so.** This may be as long as several months for some. Others will be ready to volunteer speech much sooner. Speaking in unison can be practiced from the beginning. Proceed ever so slowly in beginning classes and, even after the students become rather relaxed and comfortable, continue to go slowly. It always takes longer than we expect.
- **Remember English class is the safest, most comfortable, friendliest place a student may ever go.**

Day One in an ESOL Class

Teacher arrives early.

Learning Activity: Begin to build a community spirit by introducing students to each other and to the teacher in a friendly, nonthreatening manner.

The teacher will: Introduce her-/himself: "My name is Ann" *(pointing to self).*

The teacher will pronounce the name again, write it on the board, ask the students to copy it from the board, and repeat the teacher's name in unison.

The students will: Follow this model, say their names, write them on the board in both their native language and English (with assistance as needed), and copy each name from the board.

The teacher will: Return to the vocabulary practice and again ask the students to repeat their names. The teacher may then give additional, appropriate personal information or show a family picture. As students copy names from the board, the teacher will circulate and observe the writing activity.

Provide worksheets of the alphabet, both small and capital letters, for students who need them.

For students in intermediate and advanced classes, include a discussion of the traditional ways names are chosen and used. Topics of interest: who names the child, the meaning of names, nicknames, terms of affection, the order of given and family names, and a wife's keeping the family name or assuming husband's family name.

The teacher: Directs, encourages, and assists student introductions.

Writes vocabulary words on the board and models or demonstrates their meaning. **Listen, write, say,** and **read**. The students copy these four words.

Provides identification namecards 6x8 inches or larger. Students fold these in half and write their first names with a dark marker (not red—it is offensive to some students).

Shows the completed namecard to the class and stands the namecard in front of the student with the name facing the class.

Additional Activities:

- As students are able, enlarge the introduction to include the student's native country, their work experience, and other information the student wishes to provide.
- Make student/teacher namecards, copying the names from the board and participate in vocabulary practice by repeating, spelling, and writing the words.
- Learn to sign the attendance sheet.

Rotates around the class, pronouncing the first names of all students. The class responds in unison. When time allows, ask, "Who is from _____?" Then count and say, "____ students are from _____." Include all countries represented. Point to a world map and the country's location.

Learning and using each student's name is helpful in reducing student stress. Individual attention from the teacher at the beginning of the term is reassuring and important to students who are in an unfamiliar environment.

Students repeat the names in unison. Speaking in unison is less threatening to new ESOL students than speaking individually.

In a new class, it is important for the teacher to be relaxed, work slowly, and repeat new vocabulary words many times.

Day Two in an ESOL Class

Teacher arrives early.

Review: Continue to build a friendly community spirit to help students relax and get acquainted. Become familiar with the textbook and understand its organization and contents.

The teacher will: Conduct a review of student names and practice introductions.

Review the routine of signing attendance sheets and getting namecards and textbooks.

Check any homework sheets (alphabets). Write the word "homework" on the board and practice pronouncing it in unison. Review the meaning of the homework—which is done at home—as the study and preparation for class.

The teacher will: Review four skill words and repeat in unison. Mime each word and ask students to name the activity.

Write the word "homework" on the board and practice pronunciation in unison.

The student will: Bring completed homework sheets as assigned.

Participate in the routine of preparing for class—sign in, secure namecards and textbooks.

Take part in review exercises, speak in unison with other

class members, read namecards of other students, and, as able, enter into discussion with them.

Learning Activities:

The student will: Examine the textbook following teacher's direction.

Read page numbers and unit titles and enter into discussion as much as possible.

Become familiar with the textbook, its content, and organization.

Write personal goals for their study of English.

The teacher will: Guide the examination of the textbook, involving students to read page numbers and titles.

Ask and answer questions.

Direct vocabulary practice.

Discuss value and ways of listening to English.

Make homework assignment if desired.

Tell each student goodbye, using their names and reminding them of the next class. *"See you on Friday at nine, Maria. Goodbye."*

How Do We Discover Students' Needs?

A desire or need to communicate in English is the reason most students come to English class, but the subject matter they want to communicate is individual. One student needs to work and must learn enough English to get a job. Another hopes to talk with neighbors and make friends. A mother wants to be able to help her children with their homework. Some want to enter academic study. A few may even need to learn to read. **These interests and concerns are often best expressed as they enroll, and student concerns should be noted then.**

If students make requests for a certain level, try to determine the reason for it. Is there a friend in that class? Do they need to prove their expertise? Are they nervous and afraid of failure? Sometimes students place themselves in a different class from the one to which they were assigned. Placement can be touchy when a student's pride is involved or when they have decided they must have a particular teacher. When students request replacement, consideration should be given.

What Resources Are Available? What Materials Match My Students' Needs?

To get a sense of what is available, call Delta Systems for their catalog at 1-800-323-8270. This catalog lists most of the published ESOL materials that are presently available.

Since listening is used nearly twice as much as other skills, many recent texts emphasize listening and use tapes to provide different voices and accents. These are especially helpful because they allow the teacher-practitioner to focus on students rather than on the presentation of material. If professional tapes are not available, you may make your own by using the transcripts that are included in the student's or teacher's editions of the texts.

Children learn to speak their first language by being immersed in it for about a year before they begin to speak, and adults need a silent period too. Immersion in English is difficult for most adults to manage, but a time of ear training is more important than is often realized. In addition to their classroom experience, students need to hear English spoken in other places to become accustomed to its sounds. It takes 5 or 6 years for most people to become fluent in a second language.

Resource List

LISTENING TEXTS

The four skills—**listening, speaking, reading, writing**—are included; however, listening is emphasized.

Listen First	Literacy level, Teacher's Guide, tapes	Oxford University Press
Active Listening	3 levels, Teacher's Guide, tapes	Cambridge University Press
Tactics for Listening	3 levels, Teacher's Guide, tapes	Oxford University Press
New Streamline	3 levels, Teacher's Edition, tapes	Oxford University Press

BASIC TEXTS

The four skills are all addressed, tapes are included but are shorter and more limited in their use.

Interchange – 4 levels, Teacher's Edition, workbook, audio and videotapes, other materials. (Levels in this series are more difficult.)	Cambridge University Press
Real-Life English – 5 levels, Teacher's Edition, workbooks, audiotapes. (Units on all 5 levels are organized on the same topic and have the same page numbers. Example: Unit 5 Food, pp. 58-71 for all levels.)	Steck-Vaughn
Side-by-Side – Newly revised, 4 levels, Teacher's Edition, workbooks, audio and videotapes.	Prentice Hall, Regents (Pearson)
True Colors – 5 levels, Teacher's Edition, workbooks, audio and video tapes, other materials.	Longman

READING-WRITING TEXTS

ACCESS – literacy for prebeginners.	Prentice Hall, Regents (Pearson)
Laubach Way to English. 4 levels, Teacher's Manual, workbooks (additional materials on reading, phonics, writing).	New Readers Press

PICTURE DICTIONARIES – *Monolingual editions are suggested.*

Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary – *(red cover for beginners)* Monolingual edition and four bilingual editions.	Oxford University Press
New Oxford Picture Dictionary – *(blue cover)* 2 levels of workbooks, audiocassettes. Monolingual edition and four bilingual editions.	Oxford University Press
Oxford Picture Dictionary – *(black cover)* 2 levels of workbooks, audiocassettes, CD. Monolingual edition and 11 bilingual editions.	Oxford University Press
Word-by-Word Picture Dictionary 3 levels of workbooks, audiocassettes.	Delta Catalog

PREPARATION FOR WORKPLACE TEXTS

English ASAP	3 levels, Teacher's Edition, audiocassettes.	Steck-Vaughn
Workplace Plus	2 levels, Teacher's Edition, Resource Pack, audiocassettes, two additional levels are planned for 2002.	Pearson

GRAMMAR

Basic English Grammar	Azar, 3 levels.	Prentice Hall, Regents

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

There are many other helpful texts, readers, videos, books on games, short activities, dictation, and pronunciation available. Consult the *Tennessee Adult ESOL Curriculum Resource Book*, pp. 323–329. Page 330 has toll-free telephone numbers for publishers.

How Can I Find Out What Students Know?
(Assessment)

The best and briefest answer is **"Ask them!"** Asking is done in formal testing and in informal assessments.

Formal Assessment – Tennessee uses the BEST (Basic English Skills Test) which has both oral and written forms. Information about the test is included as Appendix 1. This test may be supplemented by adding informally acquired information on untested skills.

Unless there is clear evidence of understanding, teachers should assume that some students do not understand. The amount of repetition, illustration, and review required is surprising to teachers accustomed to teaching American students. We need to remember that they do not "know the words."

Informal Assessment – Informal assessment goes on almost constantly from the first meeting with a student. The fact that a subject has been presented in class does not mean that it has been mastered. International students do not present the same behavior clues to lack of understanding that American students exhibit. They continue to remain quiet, give good attention, and maintain pleasant facial expressions when they are completely lost. Even experienced teachers assume students understand when it is not so. Students are often too polite, embarrassed, or lack the skill to ask questions. Unless there is clear evidence of understanding, teachers should assume that some students do not understand. The amount of repetition, illustration, and review required is surprising to teachers accustomed to teaching American students. We need to remember that they do not "know the words."

Check carefully to see whether beginning students are literate in their own language. Students who are not literate need special help in learning to read. Begin with a vocabulary they are sure to know in their own language. Use family words (father, mother, sister, etc.). Use many real objects and pictures. Other helpful materials are the *Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary, ACCESS,* and the *Laubach Way to English.* Practice sheets for writing small and capital letters should include numbers and arrows to indicate the number and direction of strokes to form letters. Practice naming the letters and numbers. Many literacy level series are too difficult for these students. Tutors are most helpful in this situation.

Another method of informal assessment is to use colored index cards. These cards are sometimes used to give students a way to communicate their level of understanding. The cards are cued to traffic-light colors and their meanings. Red (or hot pink) indicates: "STOP, I don't understand". Yellow means: "Be careful—slow down—I'm having problems." Green says: "Keep going, I understand." Each student has a set of cards and may use them spontaneously, or the teacher may call for their use.

The introduction of new material should always be preceded by finding out what students know. Teacher-prepared worksheets are helpful in discovering the boundaries of students' knowledge. New information can then be connected to what is already known. New material needs a connection to give it meaning and grounding—a place where it fits. This is the "learning edge," and the time is a "teachable moment".

How Much Homework Is Necessary and What Kind?

Listening to English may be the most important homework students can do. For some students, the only English they hear is in class; and they need help to find ways they can listen to English.

The natural method of learning language, the way we all did as children, is immersion or submersion in it. Students must hear English if they are to learn to speak it. For beginning students, tapes are especially good since they need to be heard over and over again. If each student brings a tape for the teacher to record, and listens to it a number of times, then the different tapes can be rotated among class members. Libraries have books on tape that advanced students can use. One way of increasing the time they hear English is by listening to TV and radio. Children's TV programs on educational channels are appropriate for all lower level students. Teachers may provide suggestions and information on other suitable programs. A follow-up by the teacher is also needed.

Ideally each student will form a plan that includes at least a half hour of listening daily. They enjoy telling their experiences in listening to English, and it is comforting to know that others are having the same difficulties.

Ideally each student will form a plan that includes at least a half hour of listening daily. They enjoy telling their experiences in listening to English, and it is comforting to know that others are having the same difficulties. This produces a good community feeling within the class, and progress is made in sharing other experiences.

Teacher-prepared worksheets are useful, too. Students like to have their homework checked promptly. A time at the beginning of class, when review is conducted, works satisfactorily. When students are expected to do homework, it helps them accept responsibility for their learning and gives them a sense of accomplishment.

Tips for...

Beginning Classes

Allow students to remain silent until they are comfortable speaking individually. Use real objects, pictures, and picture dictionaries. Ask students to help: "Please erase the board." Then model the action. Write the request so they may read it. Ask students to repeat it in unison and to write it. Emphasize, practice, and review ways for students to request repetition and clarification. Involve as many senses as possible in vocabulary learning. It improves recall.

Intermediate Classes

Ask many "wh" questions and give extensive (perhaps exhaustive) practice until students are adept at asking for repetition and clarification. Invite students to start a journal. Encourage reading to enlarge vocabulary. Remind students who are high intermediates to change to an English-only dictionary and follow up with a bilingual one when it is needed.

Advanced Classes

Utilize students' experiences in reports to the class. Encourage them to tell their stories. Remind students of their progress. Students in advanced levels often understand the general meaning of what they hear; but they may fail to note past or other tenses, plurals, and may even omit small words (a, an, the, and prepositions). Use dictation and careful correction to make students aware of omissions.

Who Talks and How Much?

"Who talks?" is an important question for ESOL teachers to consider. Everyone should talk in ESOL classrooms! The more students are able to communicate, the more pleased they will be.

- **Teacher speech alone is the norm in beginning classes,** but the amount should be greatly reduced as students begin to speak.
- **The teacher's speech should be slow and very clear for initial classes,** but it should return to normal speed very soon as students become comfortable and relaxed.
- **Personal attention is very reassuring to students** as classes begin. Use every student's name at least once in class.
- **Don't pretend to understand a student when you don't.** Take time to work it out and call in help if needed. This models for students what they need to do when they don't understand.
- **Expect a lot.** Treat students as capable adults. Encourage them and reward attendance and effort.
- **Develop and use routines** for signing in, welcoming new students, and checking homework.
- **Plan ahead,** beyond the end of the first lesson, and read ahead, at least to the end of the first unit.
- **Include all four skills** (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in each class session.

How Do Students Learn to Hear and Make English Sounds?

Most students feel sure they know how to listen. Yet, becoming able to hear and make English sounds must be learned by careful, concentrated, and repeated listening. It requires a surprising amount of time to mentally hear the different and distinguishing sounds of another tongue, and it is not accomplished easily or automatically. If you doubt this, try to say the names of several students with non-English names.

Spelling them is an additional challenge because, even when the letters are familiar ones, they often have different sounds (example: "j" in Spanish or "x" in Chinese). This is very confusing and most students go through at least a period when they misidentify and mispronounce the vowels "a," "e," and "i" before they are able to separate the English sound from the one in their native tongue.

Many Americans have had the disappointing experience of finding their college-studied foreign language almost useless when they visited a country where it was spoken. This happens to students who have studied English in their countries, too.

Many Americans have had the disappointing experience of finding their college-studied foreign language almost useless when they visited a country where it was spoken. This happens to students who have studied English in their countries, too. They may read and understand English, and they may know the grammar better than many Americans, but their ability to speak and be understood, or to understand American English, presents more difficulties than they had expected.

To understand others, students need to comprehend reductions. (*I'm* rhymes with *dime*, *you'll* rhymes with *fuel*, etc.) They need to be familiar with the inflections of questions and answers. One of the special values of partner and small-group work is the opportunity and necessity it gives each student to understand other students' speech. It is good preparation for understanding their neighbors, clerks, and others.

Clarey and Dixon's book titled *Pronunciation Exercises in English* is very helpful in both the preface and exercises.

It is commonly agreed that students past puberty will not be able to achieve native pronunciation, but they can learn to speak so they are understood.

How Should Student Records and Reports Be Kept?

Each Tennessee ESOL program has its own method of keeping student records. In addition to these program records, teachers may use the skill charts in the *Tennessee Adult ESOL Curriculum Resource Book*, which are found on pp. 337–354. These can be kept in a student's portfolio, saved in a three-ring notebook, or both.

What Are Some Basic Teaching Approaches in ESOL Class?

Beginning international students do not know the words, and the only ways to communicate are through facial expressions, body language, actions, and real objects.

Teaching English to international adults is both like and unlike teaching native English speakers. Beginning international students do not know the words, and the only ways to communicate are through facial expressions, body language, actions, and real objects.

Audiocassette listening is a basic teaching approach. Learning to hear and make English sounds requires nearly endless repetition of the same words and sentences before students can hear them in their heads and repeat them. It is difficult and tiring to try to say the same thing in exactly the same way over and over. Tapes can be replayed as many times as is necessary without any variation in stress, speed, intonation, or inflection. Headphones are helpful and allow for individual listening practice.

Total Physical Response (TPR) consists of an imperative and a physical response. Example: "Please open the book." The teacher demonstrates and opens the book. The students listen for the imperative and watch the physical response as it is modeled. The teacher repeats, "Open the book," and gestures to the students to perform the physical activity of opening the book. This parallels the action of a small child who is told, "Open your mouth." The language is accompanied by the mother's modeling the desired action as she opens her mouth. Soon the request, "Open your mouth," probably accompanied by the approaching spoon of food, results in the child's physical response. This action demonstrates the child's understanding of the phrase. It is an effective way to learn. Research supports the concept that physical response to commands produces long-term memory.

TPR is not just a physical demonstration of the word, such as jumping when the imperative "jump" is given. It also includes underlining, circling, writing a checkmark or an x, and pointing. These physical responses indicate understanding.

An advantage of this method is the use of language in phrases rather than in single words. This way of learning means whole phrases ("Pick up your book.") are internalized, and learning is organized more quickly.

Partner or small-group work is another nontraditional method. Since students' purpose in attending English class is to be able to communicate in English, it follows that the more communication is practiced, the more quick-

ly students' goals will be reached. In many classes, the interaction/communication is between the teacher and students as the teacher calls on them. Other students are quiet as one student recites. If there are 12 or more students in a class, most of the students are quiet most of the time. When students work as partners or in small groups, this increases their opportunity to speak many times over. It also reduces the amount of stress experienced in speaking. Changing the direction of communication from between teacher and student to between, or among, students can be disconcerting to students and/or the teacher. There may be concern that the students are not being "taught correctly" or that time is not being well used; however, students are learning by "doing" rather than by being taught.

Consider again the way a child's first language develops. As speech emerges, most children do not have their speech corrected. They are encouraged by delighted parents who are joyful over their attempts to speak. As speech continues, children correct their own mistakes as they notice how others speak and they begin to understand differences in meaning. Much of the problem for English language learners rests in the small amount of exposure they have to English and in the limited amount of practice time.

A good way to begin pair or group work is to have students do an exercise individually and then check their answers with a neighbor. This partnering activity can be repeated several times with different partners until students feel comfortable working together.

Partners then progress to filling out a teacher-prepared sheet together. They ask "What is your mother's name?", "Please spell it.", etc.

When students work together it:

- ✔ **Helps keep them interested.**
- ✔ **Gives increased chances to speak.**
- ✔ **Relieves the pressure of answering the teacher and the risk and fear of being wrong.**
- ✔ **Increases their dependence on themselves.**
- ✔ **Frees the teacher to circulate and observe student work.**

Mistakes should not be emphasized. Consider carefully what ways of dealing with mistakes will be most helpful to students. If mistakes are common to most class members, a class review may be wise. If they are limited to a small group, this group may be informed. If they are individual mistakes, asking the student to review the mistake may be all that is required, or an explanation may be needed.

Teacher responsibility is not remove` when students are doing partner or small-group work. It is changed to observing students; noting their responses, misunderstandings, or mistakes; and helping when help is needed.

A lesson on time, its meaning, and its management may allow humor and open mindedness to serve the situation. One year a group of six or more Brazilian women habitually arrived together about 45 minutes after class had begun. They stopped at the door with beaming smiles and greeted the class with pleasure, "Aylo, aylo!" Then they advanced into the room and greeted each person individually with the warm, gracious Latin greeting. The teacher found this interruption less than helpful, since it stopped class work and the focus of the lesson. She tried many ways to alter their behavior but had no success. Finally she yielded to the friendliness and charm, allowing about 5 minutes for them to find seats and settle in for the rest of class. By doing this, she avoided a confrontation and irritation and probably the class benefited from the flexibility and the good nature of the tardy students.

A Few More Thoughts

Even among those born in the United States who speak English well, there is a difference in what being "on time" means. To some, "Time is money" and arriving on time, or even ahead of time, is a moral virtue. Others do not feel this way. When a class has Hispanic, Asian, and Middle Eastern students, plus students from a few other places, the views of time are really varied. Some teachers handle the divergence of student arrival times at class by working individually with the students who have arrived, checking homework, and answering questions. Others pass out individual work sheets when it is time to begin class. Some play a game or have casual conversation until most students have arrived. There is probably no easy way to cope, but it does help to find a way that is comfortable for both students and teachers and one that permits class to begin without frustration.

Summary

Educators agree that there is no one best way to teach English. Experiment and discover what works best for you. Maintain as large an amount of student talk in class as possible. This is often a criterion by which teaching excellence is judged.

Follow up promptly on students who are absent. Telephone them, send cards, ask friends or have class members write a note. Work to increase your knowledge of the English language and your ability to answer students' questions about English usage. *Practical English Usage* is a fine resource for this. It is published by Oxford Press.

And, finally, **one of the best ways to improve your skills is to be associated with other teachers**. It's rewarding to observe another teacher's class. Peer teachers and others welcome visits, discussion, and questions. Use e-mail and the Tennessee ESOL electronic discussion group to communicate with other teachers. Directions for signing on to the discussion group are included as Appendix 3. Read about teaching and endeavor to personalize it to give special meaning to each student.

Enjoy!

APPENDIX 1

Administering the BEST

1. The teachers will administer the Short Form or the Long Form of the Oral BEST to determine placement of students. (Caution—if the Short Form is used, it must be converted by using the Score Conversion Table found on page 17, and it cannot be used again once it has been used for initial placement).

2. The students will be placed in 1 of 6 levels determined by the National Reporting System (NRS). They are

- Beginning ESOL Literacy
- Beginning ESOL
- Low Intermediate ESOL
- High Intermediate ESOL
- Low Advanced ESOL
- High Advanced ESOL

3. The students will be given a posttest after their first 3 months in class or before that time if the teacher believes the student is ready to be tested. Additional posttests are given according to teacher discretion. When a student reaches the Low Intermediate ESOL level, he/she may be given the Literacy Test.

The Literacy Test is scored by **Student Performance Levels (SPL)**. There are 8 SPL levels. The levels and their scores are as follows:

1.	Level 0	0-2
2.	Level 1	3-7
3.	Level 2	8-21
4.	Level 3	22-35
5.	Level 4	36-46
6.	Level 5	47-53
7.	Level 6	54-65
8.	Level 7	66 and above

The posttest must be either the **Long Form of the Oral BEST or the Literacy Test. The Short Form of the test cannot be used as a posttest.**

If the last test administered to the student was the Literacy Test, the following (post) test must be the Literacy Test. If the last test administered to the student was the Oral BEST, Long Form, then that test must be used as the posttest.

(You cannot compare apples and bananas to measure student growth. You must use the same test.)

There are two forms of the Oral BEST Long Form. They are Form "B" and Form "C." These are similar and may be used to alternate the posttests.

After "topping out" of the Oral BEST and the Literacy BEST test, **the student should be given the TABE, Level M, Forms 7 and 8.**

This test was normed in 1992 and will test levels of accomplishment for students working at the 3.6–6.9 grade levels.

ESOL students should not leave the ESOL classes until their reading scores on the TABE, ABLE, or AMES (or whatever test is being used in their program that gives a grade level) **reach 6.0 on the reading test.**

In addition, it is strongly recommended that the students complete the Check Lists of Competencies found on pages 337-355 in the *Tennessee ESOL Curriculum Resource Book.*

Summary of BEST Administration Guidelines

After following these guidelines—completing the Oral BEST Long Form, the Literacy BEST, the Check Lists of Competencies in the *Tennessee ESOL Curriculum Resource Book* and scoring 6.0 in Reading on the TABE (Level M, Forms 7 and 8) or the ABLE or AMES—the student will be ready to move out of ESOL to pursue an academic track or to move into an adult ABE/GED class.

SCORE CONVERSION TABLE *(used to convert the Short Form to Long Form)*

Short Form Total	Long Form Total	Short Form Total	Long Form Total
1	3	21	40
2	5	22	41
3	7	23	44
4	8	24	47
5	11	25	49
6	13	26	50
7	15	27	53
8	16	28	55
9	18	29	57
10	20	30	59
11	22	31	61
12	24	32	62
13	26	33	64
14	27	34	66
15	28	35	68
16	31	36	70
17	34	37	72
18	36	38	74
19	37	39	76
20	38	40	78

NRS (National Reporting System) Placement Levels for the Oral BEST Short and Long Forms

Short Form Oral BEST	Long Form Oral BEST
Beginning ESL Literacy 0–7	Beginning ESL Literacy 0–15
Beginning ESL 8–22	Beginning ESL 16–41
Low Intermediate 23–26	Low Intermediate 42–51
High Intermediate 27–29	High Intermediate 52–57
Low Advanced 30–33	Low Advanced 58–64
High Advanced 34–40	High Advanced 65+

Guidelines for Giving the SHORT ORAL BEST TEST for Level Placement

- Choose a quiet place for the test. You will need a table, two chairs placed side-by-side at the table, a test booklet, a scoring sheet, a pencil, and $3.84 as follows: three one-dollar bills, 2 quarters, 2 dimes, 2 nickels, and 4 pennies.

- The *Test Manual* directs the examiner to fill in the information about the student either before the student comes into the room or after the test is over.

- Rise, welcome the student, and shake hands if appropriate. Remember and honor the Muslim ban on men and women touching. Seat the student beside you, on the left if you are right-handed and on the right if you are left-handed. Do what is possible to reduce anxiety by friendly attention and communication.

TESTING PROCEDURES:

- Keep scoring as unobtrusive as possible, placing a check in the correct oval or square. Respond to all answers in the same way with a smile or nod. Remember this is a testing procedure, not a teaching one. If the student gives no answer or says "I don't know," the question may be repeated once, exactly as written. Do not paraphrase. **Complete sentences are not necessary. Give full credit if the answer is what a native American speaker might say.**

- There are two types of questions: **communication** and **fluency**.

Communication questions are scored in the small squares.

- Questions 1–4, 6–11, and 15–16 are communication questions.
- For question 11, place the coins on the table with one of each pair of coins heads up and the other tails up.
  - — *Score 2* when the answer is understandable, appropriate, and grammatically correct.
  - — *Score 1* when the answer is understandable and appropriate but not grammatically correct
  - — *Score 0* when the answer is not understandable, inappropriate, or no answer is given.

Fluency questions allow the test giver to encourage additional response by saying, "Tell me more," or "Is there anything else?"

Fluency questions are scored in the ovals or circles. Grammar does not affect their scoring.

- Questions 5, 12–14, and 17–18 are fluency questions.
  - — *Score 3* when the answer is full, appropriate, and elaborated with details.
  - — *Score 2* when the answer is more than minimal and appropriate, but not elaborated.
  - — *Score 1* when the answer is minimal and appropriate.
  - — *Score 0* when there is no answer or the answer is inappropriate or not understandable.

Check the answer sheet to be sure the personal information is complete. Rise and thank the student for his/her work. Tell the student that the answers given will show what material or which class will be good for him/her.

APPENDIX 2

Sample Information Sheet

Date _____/_____/_____
Month Day Year

My name is _____.
First Middle Last

Name I like to be called _____. Telephone number (_____) _____

My address is _____
Number Street Apartment Number

_____.
City Zip Code

My email address is _____. I am: ☐ Male ☐ Female

I was born _____/_____/_____. I am _____ years old.
Month Day Year

I am from _____ _____.
City Country

My language is _____. I also speak _____.

I attended school _____ years in my country. I have studied English _____ years.

I worked in my country ☐ Yes ☐ No My job was _____.

☐ I do ☐ do not have a job in the U.S.

☐ I want ☐ do not want a job in this country.

I came to the U.S. ☐ to work ☐ to study ☐ to visit ☐ to be with my family.

☐ I will return to my country (date) _____. ☐ I will not return to my country.

I live with ☐ my wife/husband ☐ children ☐ parents ☐ friends ☐ by myself.

I want to practice ☐ speaking English ☐ understanding English ☐ reading ☐ writing.

I want to speak English ☐ at work ☐ so I can get a job ☐ to help my children ☐ with friends ☐ when I go shopping.

I like to _____ (hobby, special talent, or interest).

Interviewed by _____

APPENDIX 3

How to Subscribe to the ESOL Discussion List

Subscribing to the list: **esol-news@cls.coe.utk.edu**

1. Go to your e-mail.

2. In the message area, type: subscribe esol-news (don't put your name after this).

3. Leave all other areas blank, including the areas for CC, Attachment, and Subject. Delete your signature block if you have one at the end of your e-mail.

4. Send this message to: **majordomo@cls.coe.utk.edu**

In a short while, you should receive a welcome message from the CLS server if your subscription is successful. Save the welcome message for future reference. ***Please note:*** After your successful subscription to the list, all future discussion messages should be sent to: **esol-news@cls.coe.utk.edu**

This discussion list is a great opportunity for the ESOL teachers in Tennessee to share information.

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